

Business District

The Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village is centered around its business district. Most businesses in the district, generally focused at the intersection of Fauntleroy Way SW and California Avenue SW, are oriented towards serving the surrounding residential neighborhood. The district's largest business, the Thriftway supermarket, reopened its doors in a new facility this year, almost exactly one year after being destroyed by fire.

The business district is zoned NC3-30, a zone intended for pedestrian oriented neighborhood service businesses and multi-family residential structures. The majority of the commercial uses are in older single story structures oriented towards California Avenue SW. The multi-family buildings are, for the most part, multiple story structures built to the height limit of 30 feet

Morgan Junction does not have the large land parcels needed for major chain stores but has excellent demographics and locations suitable for smaller stores. Attracting more small shops and a greater variety of restaurants into the district were goals expressed during Phase I outreach. Maintaining and enhancing the appearance of the business district and making the district convenient and pedestrian friendly also emerged as important issues for the community.

During Phase II, business participation on the Business District Committee was very sparse. It was assumed by the Planning Committee that this was due to the business owner's general satisfaction with the current state of the commercial area, and being too busy running their businesses, rather than because of lack of interest

Goals, Policies and Recommendations

Goal 1: Support the economic vitality of the local Business District.

Policy 1.1: Encourage improvements in the business district that will promote the diversification of the Morgan community business district.

Goal 2: Enhance the physical appearance of the Morgan Business District, so it is an attractive place for people to live, work, and shop,

Policy 2.1: Use City design guidelines to develop consistent building types and characteristics with the option of reviewing guidelines in the future.

Recommendation: Supplement current City design guidelines with guidelines that are specific to Morgan Junction in order to maintain the current small-town character,

Recommendation: Place notice of City Design Review meetings in the West Seattle Herald and post notices of the meetings at the project site,

Goal 3: Make the Business District accessible for customers and visitors.

Policy 3.1: Promote the use of transit, including possible shuttles, to reduce parking and traffic congestion.

Policy 3.2: Pursue new and inventive ways to improve parking and access to businesses

Policy 3.3: Create a pedestrian friendly environment to encourage walking to and through the business district.

Recommendation: Improve California Avenue SW streetscape with the installation of landscaping and street trees and the construction of curb bulbs,

Recommendation: Create a "green streets" link for bicycles and pedestrians from Morgan Junction through the West Seattle Junction to the Admiral district on the alley east of California Avenue SW (Junction Way East).

Goal 4: Continue to promote cooperation among businesses, residents and community groups.

Policy 4.1: Encourage the creation of public gathering places,

Recommendation: Develop a community plaza at the intersection of Fauntleroy Way SW and SW Morgan Street,

Strong support for local design guidelines emerged from community review of the above goals and policies. Many expressed the desire to maintain the "small town" character of the business district, and to make the district unique and distinctive; a place that attracts new businesses as well as shoppers. The need for better guidelines for the design of multi-family residential and mixed-use projects was frequently voiced,



Mixed-use developments provide housing and business opportunities in the business district.

The City of Seattle has developed a manual entitled *Preparing your own Design Guidelines - A Handbook for Seattle's Neighborhoods*. This handbook could be a useful tool in helping the Morgan Junction neighborhood develop design guidelines that are specific to the neighborhood. An excerpt from the Handbook is included in the Housing and Land Use section of this plan.

Housing and Land-Use

Background

It would be an understatement to say that maintenance of the single-family character of the Morgan Junction Neighborhood is a high priority of our community. Throughout the neighborhood planning process, this sentiment was expressed again and again.

Concern for the protection of our single-family neighborhoods began when the City designated Morgan Junction as a Residential Urban Village in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and established the preliminary boundaries for the urban village. Among the criteria used by the City in designating urban villages were:

- The area's current zoning, which provides sufficient capacity for future growth and development. The Morgan Junction urban village has the ability to absorb 300-plus new residential units under current zoning.),
- Location along major transportation routes, including roads and mass transit lines, and
- The ability to achieve residential densities which will support compact living and pedestrian- and transit-friendly environments (for example, 2,000 dwelling units exist or can be accommodated with a 2,000 foot/radius of the center of the urban village).

Impact of the Urban Village on Zoning and Capital Investment

The urban village designation has implications for both zoning and capital investment by the City.

Impacts on Zoning

Urban villages have access to zoning options not available to areas outside of village boundaries. Urban village neighborhoods can:

- Suggest rezones of single-family areas within the urban village boundary to low density multifamily or commercial zones in areas close to principal commercial streets;
- Allow Residential Small Lot (RSL) zoning, which can include (1) single-family houses on individual small lots, (2) two houses on a one lot, and/or (3) clusters of small cottages on larger lots;
- Identify commercial areas within the village boundary where residential development will be emphasized (Neighborhood Commercial/Residential zoning);
- Designate areas within an urban village as appropriate or inappropriate for moderate-density multifamily zoning (including L3 and L4 zones);
- Recommend how residential buildings without ground-floor commercial space should be treated in commercial zones within the urban village. The plan can allow such single-purpose residential

buildings outright, permit them only under specific conditions, or it can prohibit these buildings in commercial zones altogether,

There has been much discussion and disagreement on the Morgan Planning Committee regarding the impact of the urban village on zoning, especially on the single-family zones.

- Some members of the committee see the urban village as offering protection for single-family zones by stipulating in the Neighborhood Plan exactly what zoning changes can and cannot occur, The majority of the Administrative Committee subscribes to this view,
- Other members of the committee view the urban village as an overlay zone which will lead to changes in the permitted uses and development standards of the underlying" zoning, Rezones and variances may also be easier to obtain within the village than outside, These changes, in turn, would allow the City to increase allowable densities and building size (see the diagram below), possibly accelerating the rate of development in the Morgan area, The majority of the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee holds this opinion

Impacts on Capital Facilities and Investment

The Comprehensive Plan has a goal of making capital investments consistent with the urban village strategy by encouraging the City to locate "new community-based capital facilities," including libraries, community centers, and parks in areas that serve urban villages. It also requires the City to provide written justification when proposing to locate major capital facilities outside urban village areas. The City is also directed to "consider providing capital facilities or amenities in urban villages as an incentive to attract both public and private investments to an area" (*Source: City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office*).

The Comprehensive Plan includes goals for the provision of adequate and accessible open space within urban villages. Efforts to acquire open space and develop recreation facilities are directed to give particular attention to serving urban villages, which are in general expected to have the greatest need for additional open space and recreation facilities (*Source: City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office*),

These issues, too, have generated much debate on the Planning Committee,

- "Some committee members believe that the urban village will make it easier for our neighborhood to acquire needed open space, amenities, and capital facilities, and that funding will be more readily available for maintenance and new projects within the village than outside its boundaries, A majority of the Administrative Committee subscribes to this view.
- To other members of the Planning Committee, the urban village offers no guarantee that funding will be available for these facilities and amenities without an increase in property taxes, While the capital improvements are not a uncertainty, the higher density requirements within the village are, A majority of the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee holds 'this opinion.

Principal Issues Addressed

In light of these concerns, coupled with the opinions received from the community during the outreach and validation events, the implications of the Urban Village designation for the neighborhood's single-family character became the primary focus for the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee.

After many hours of study and discussion, the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee determined that there were four areas of primary importance on which efforts would be focused:

- **Zoning**—how best to preserve the single-family areas and small town feel of the community, while exploring the possible impact of adopting any of the “zoning tools” offered to urban villages by the City, such as Residential Small Lot (RSL) zones.
- **Building Height, Bulk and Setbacks**—are there mechanisms that can be created that will result in better, more compatible design within our existing multifamily and commercial zones? This would include recommendations for specific design guidelines.
- **Parking**—much discussion was focused on parking problems, both in the business district and on nearby residential streets, Special attention was paid to the impact of new multifamily development on the on-street parking situation.
- **The Urban Village Boundary**—Should it remain as proposed by the City or be changed. This issue was discussed in the *Urban Village Boundary* section on page 23.

Zoning

It was the general opinion of the community, the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee, and the Administrative Committee that zoning in the neighborhood not be changed and that there should be no difference between permitted uses, development standards, and rezoning/variance criteria within and outside of the urban village. One issue that garnered special attention was Residential Small Lot zoning.

Residential Small Lot Zoning (RSL)

The RSL zones allow for development of smaller detached homes built on lots that are one-half to one-quarter the size of a standard single-family lot. The idea behind small-lot housing is that, because the houses and lots are smaller, they would be more affordable than conventional single-family homes. There is no guarantee, however, that this will actually happen under market conditions that may exist in the Morgan Junction neighborhood over the next 20 years.

The RSL zones can be used only within designated urban village boundaries. The local community can determine which areas within an urban village could be designated RSL and these locations must be specified in the Neighborhood Plan. There are four distinct types of RSL zones that can potentially be included in our Neighborhood Plan:

RSL Allows small houses on individual small lots. Minimum lot size is 2,500 square feet, half of a typical 50' x 120' or 40' x 128' lot. Maximum building height is 30 feet (as opposed to a

35-foot maximum for most single-family houses). A common example of this kind of housing is “skinny” houses which are placed side-by-side. Another example involves splitting a standard lot cross-wise to allow smaller houses of more standard proportions,

- RSL/T Allows two houses on a single lot (“tandem houses”) at a maximum density of one house per 2,500 square feet of lot area. Minimum overall lot size is 5,000 square feet and houses cannot be more than 28 feet high,
- RSL/C Allows clustering of at least four “cottage” houses on lots of at least 6,400 square feet, A typical 50 x 128 foot lot could meet the 1,600-square foot maximum density requirement and support 4 “cottage” houses, Additional cottages can be placed on the lot for each 1,600 square feet of lot area above 6,400 square feet, Each cottage cannot be larger than 650 square feet and maximum building height is 28 feet,
- RSL/TC Allows both tandem and cottage housing.

Community Response

A segment of the community felt that some form of RSL zoning could be adopted in specific areas, subject to strict design guidelines, to perhaps create more affordable housing (especially for seniors) and to provide a “buffer” zone between the single-family areas and the taller buildings in the multifamily and commercial zones. Other members of the community expressed a number of concerns about RSL zoning, including:

- Further increased density in the neighborhood
- Adding even more traffic to an already overtaxed system
- Adding to off-street parking problems
- The architectural appearance of cottage and “skinny” housing

There also was uncertainty in the community about how the size of lots was measured, especially for cottage housing. Does the area of the lot consist of the actual parcel, or can the area to the centerline of the adjoining alley (if any) be included when calculating lot area, The total number of lots potentially large enough to accommodate cottage housing is considerably larger if a portion of the alley can be included.

The total of all input received throughout the Phase I and Phase II process indicates that the broader community does not fully understand and/or support RSL zoning. There were some mixed signals received during the Phase I and Phase II outreach, for example:

- Comments received during meetings and a survey administered by the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee in early 1998 indicated that a majority of the community was opposed to using any form of small-lot zoning.
- In another survey, which was administered at the May 16, 1998 Community Check-In, about 2/3 of the respondents felt that some form of small-lot zoning was appropriate, but there was no agreement about which type(s) of RSL zone should be used.

Therefore, “the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee recommended against adopting RSL zoning anywhere in the neighborhood as part of the Morgan Junction Plan. The Administrative Committee decided not to adopt any’ RSL zoning at the present time, but that the use of RSL zones could be considered at an unspecified future date. The were two main reasons for this decision:

- . The above-described lack of consensus within the community about RSL zoning,
- . A lack of time to fully explore this complex issue, educate the community, discuss the pros and cons, and get feedback. After spending more than two years doing outreach, visioning, and “getting ready to plan,” the time available for actually doing the planning was less than eight months. This was insufficient time to conduct the kind of wide-ranging, in-depth analysis and community discussion needed to deal with a brand-new zoning and housing type which the community had never seen before (while still allowing time to cover all the other issues addressed in neighborhood planning).

Design Guidelines

Throughout the Phase I and Phase II outreach and visioning activities, members of the community expressed concerns about the physical appearance of new development. Design guidelines were often mentioned as a potential means of addressing this issue.

The City of Seattle has developed a manual entitled *Preparing Your Own Design Guidelines—A Handbook for Seattle’s Neighborhoods*. This handbook could be a useful tool in helping the Morgan Junction neighborhood develop design guidelines that are specific to the neighborhood. An excerpt from the Handbook is included on the following page,

Because of the magnitude, complexity, and potential cost of the drawing up guidelines specific to Morgan Junction, this project is to be undertaken in the future. The development of neighborhood design guidelines would include a process for extensive community input and review,

Single-Purpose Residential in the NC Zones

The Plan recommends against adopting SPR (Single-Purpose Residential) in the NCI, NC2, NC3 neighborhood commercial zones at this time due to the complexity of zoning issues. The Housing and Land Use sub-committee recommends addressing this issue by addendum or amendment to the Plan, following adequate study.

WHAT ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

With establishment of the Design Review Program, Seattle has adopted a set of citywide Design Guidelines. These guidelines describe ways that new multifamily and commercial buildings can be compatible with the environment around them. In contrast to the City's Land Use Code, which contains very specific regulations, the guidelines provide examples that illustrate how projects can better fit their surroundings,

The goals of the City's Design Review Program are:

- . To encourage better design and site planning to help ensure that new development enhances the character of the city and sensitively fits into neighborhoods, while allowing for diversity and creativity.
- . To provide flexibility in the application of development standards to better meet the intent of the Land Use Code as established by City policy, to meet neighborhood objectives, and to provide for effective mitigation of a proposed project's impact and influence on a neighborhood.
- . To improve communication and mutual understanding among developers, neighborhoods and the City early and throughout the development review process.

The Citywide Design Guidelines are organized into five major topics (1) site planning (2) height, bulk and scale; (3) architectural elements and materials (4) pedestrian environment and (5) landscaping,

Through departures from development standards in the Code, design review will allow the Code to be applied more flexibly. Development standard departures may be permitted for the following through design review

- . Structure width and depth
 - Setback requirements
- . Modulation
- . Design, location and access to parking
 - Open space requirements
- . Lot coverage
- . Screening and landscaping requirements
- . Standards for the location and design of nonresidential uses in mixed use buildings,

Other development standards, such as height, density, and parking requirements, may be added to this list through neighborhood-specific design guidelines. Neighborhood Design Guidelines may address specific development standards to reflect the existing neighborhood pattern.

Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The design review program provides the opportunity for neighborhoods to develop design guidelines that are specific to individual neighborhoods. Once adopted by the City Council, Neighborhood Design Guidelines will supersede the Citywide Guidelines and become the basis for project review within that neighborhood.

Design review is a tool that allows increased flexibility in the application of zoning regulation. It provides an opportunity for early discussion of a proposed project's design between the neighborhood and the applicant before a permit application is even submitted. Because of the increased dialogue and flexibility, new development will more likely fit the character of its surroundings than would be possible if zoning regulations were strictly applied.

Parking

The issue of parking is related to both housing/land-use and transportation. Of particular concern to the community and the Housing/Land-Use Subcommittee were the following:

The number of off-street parking stalls required per unit in multifamily and mixed-use buildings under the zoning code. This requirement has been declining steadily over the past 20 years as the City has sought to encourage more people to use mass transit. During the outreach activities, however, most respondents expressed the opinion that this policy is not grounded in reality. The number of motor vehicles per household has continued to increase, as has the number of vehicle miles driven.

Reductions in the minimum parking requirement merely force an increasing number of residents of multifamily units to park their cars on the street. This has created a severe access problem in some parts of the neighborhood, most notably residential streets close to the business district. One particular example is the section of 42nd Avenue SW between Holly Street and Graham Street, which is frequently crowded with parked cars on both sides of the street, making only a single lane available for traffic.

A related problem is the lack of off-street parking for guests of building tenants in multifamily buildings and customers, guests, and employees in mixed-use buildings. Again, this surplus parking demand spills out onto the street. A lack of off-street customer parking may also contribute to the high commercial vacancy rate in some mixed-use buildings in the neighborhood,

Finally, for better or for worse, the car-buying preferences of the motoring public have changed in the past decade. The proportion of small cars has declined, while larger vehicles (pickup trucks, vans, and sport-utility vehicles) has grown dramatically. The ratio of compact to standard parking stalls allowed in the zoning code has failed to reflect changing patterns of vehicle ownership, effectively reducing the number of available off-street parking stalls from a functional standpoint.

For these reasons and others, the Housing and Land-Use Subcommittee recommended a number of policies to redress the imbalance and make off-street parking more reflective of the actual auto ownership and usage patterns of today's population.

Goals, Policies and Recommendations

Land Use Goals

Goal 1: Preserve and maintain single family housing and the character of single family neighborhoods.

Policy 1.1 Retain all existing single family zoning in the Neighborhood.

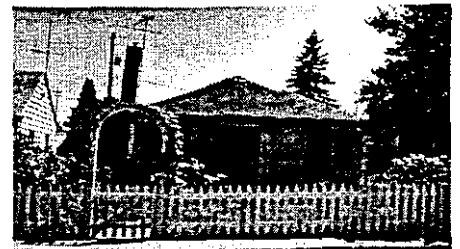
Policy 1.2 Ensure that all single-family development standards and criteria are the same in all single-family zones in the Morgan Junction Planning Area.

Recommendation: Protect the character and integrity of the existing Single Family areas through City adoption of the following policies:



Do not approve" changes in zoning from single-family zone (all zones with SF prefix) to multi-family or commercial zoning in the Morgan Junction Planning Area.

- Do not approve changes in zone boundaries, development standards, or permitted uses for any zones within the Morgan Junction community regardless of whether the that zone is located inside or outside the urban village boundaries.
- Permit new multifamily housing only in areas zoned for multi-family and commercial use as of April 1, 1998.
- Permit new commercial uses only in areas zoned for commercial and mixed-use as of April 1, 1998.



Recommendation: Amend the Urban Village boundary as follows. The description follows the boundary in a counterclockwise direction, starting in the extreme northeast corner of the village area. Unless other wise specified, the boundary follows the centerline of all streets and alleys described below. (See map on page 29)

The Point of Beginning is at the intersection of Fauntleroy Way SW and 39th Avenue SW (the northeast corner of the urban village). From there, the boundary runs southwesterly along Fauntleroy Way SW to SW Juneau Street; thence west along SW Juneau Street to 44th Avenue SW; thence south along 44th Avenue SW to SW Graham Street; thence east along SW Graham Street to the alley between California Avenue SW and 44th Avenue SW; thence south along said alley to SW Eddy Street; thence southwesterly along SW

Eddy Street to the lot line separating parcels 762620-0040 and 762620-0045; thence southeasterly along said lot line to SW Beveridge Place; thence southwesterly along SW Beveridge Place to 45th Avenue SW; thence southerly along 45th Avenue SW and Fauntleroy Way SW to SW Myrtle Street; thence easterly along SW Myrtle Street to California Avenue SW; thence north along California Avenue SW to SW Frontenac Street; thence easterly along SW Frontenac Street to the alignment of the west margin of 42nd Avenue SW (if extended); thence north along said west margin to 42nd Avenue SW thence north along 42nd Avenue SW to SW Holly Street; thence east along SW Holly Street to the alley between 4151 Avenue SW and 42nd Avenue SW; thence north along said alley to SW Morgan Street; thence east along SW Morgan Street to the alley between 39th Avenue SW and 40th Avenue SW (and Fauntleroy Way); thence north along said alley to SW Juneau Street; thence east along SW Juneau Street to 39th Avenue SW; thence north along 39th Avenue SW to the Point of Beginning,

Recommendation: Adopt resolution directing DCLU to place notice in the West Seattle Herald, post notices at the project site, and provide advance notice to MoCA of all design reviews, land use permit applications, rezone applications, variance requests, conditional use requests and proposed changes to land use or development regulations.

Goal 2: Preserve the character of the urban village by focusing new commercial and multi-family development into a well-planned and cohesive core.

Policy 2.1: Allow new commercial and multi-family development in areas currently zoned for such uses.

Policy 2.2: Concentrate commercial development in the village in the vicinity of the intersection of Fauntleroy Way SW and California Avenue SW,

Policy 2.3: Concentrate multi-family residential development in the existing low-density multi-family zones and in the neighborhood commercial zones along California Avenue.



Recommendation: Maintain the appropriate scale of multi-family housing in the Morgan Junction planning area by City adoption of the following policy:

- Do not approve changes in zoning from LDT, LI, L2 or L3 to any zoning classification of L4 or higher. Land use changes that take effect automatically, unless a neighborhood plan provides otherwise, shall not take effect in the Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village.

Goal 3: Protect neighborhood character by limiting building heights.

Policy 3.1: Retain existing height limits in the commercial and multi-family zones,

Policy 3.2: Apply height limits to all parts of buildings.

Policy 3.3: Provide information for community members who wish to create a Local Improvement District for the purpose of burying overhead utility lines,

Recommendation: Conduct study to evaluate the effects on new development of requiring that all mechanical equipment and mechanical penthouses remain within the maximum or base height limits set forth in the zoning code.

Goal 4 Balance residential and commercial growth in the urban village with the need for adequate parking, traffic circulation and pedestrian safety on neighborhood streets,

Policy 4.1: Encourage developers of new commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family buildings to provide sufficient off-street parking, over and above code requirements, for customers, residents, and guest of building tenants,

Policy 4.2: Increase parking requirements for new multi-family development to reflect the ratio of vehicle ownership per multi-family dwelling unit in the neighborhood.

Policy 4.3: Adjust the number of compact parking spaces allowed in new development to reflect the proportion of compact cars registered in the city of Seattle, based on Washington Department of Motor Vehicle license data,

Recommendation: Adopt resolution directing DCLU to encourage developers of new commercial, mixed-use and multi-family buildings to provide sufficient off-street parking (over and above code minimum requirements) for customers, residents and guests of building tenants.

Recommendation: Conduct a study to explore methods for creating wider sidewalks, including setbacks, in appropriate locations adjacent to commercial, multifamily and mixed-use developments without decreasing existing traffic and parking capacity,

Goal 5: Ensure that the design of new multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use buildings is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Policy 5.1: Use current City design guidelines to develop consistent building types and characteristics with the option of reviewing guidelines in the future.

Policy 5.2: Explore methods of creating wider sidewalks in appropriate locations adjacent to commercial, multi-family and mixed use developments.

Recommendation: Develop community-based design guidelines for new multi-family, commercial and mixed-use developments to ensure their compatibility with the character of the Morgan Junction neighborhood. These guidelines should address building height, building setbacks, and building bulk and shape.

Housing Goals

Goal 1: Accommodate housing for a variety of demographic and income groups.

Policy 1.1: Encourage and promote home ownership for a broad range of income levels and a diverse range of people and building styles.

Policy 1.2: Encourage the preservation of well-managed low-income housing both inside and outside the urban village.

Policy 1.3: Support and promote existing and new programs and policies aimed at helping low-income persons, especially seniors, retain ownership of their homes.

Policy 1.4 Accommodate low and moderate-income housing (as defined by City standards) in the urban village in an amount that is proportional and equitable relative to the quantity of low and moderate-income housing citywide.

Recommendation: Adopt resolution directing the appropriate public agencies to consider the proximity and impact of the High Point public housing project on the Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village when considering the citywide distribution of low and moderate-income housing.